

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph [0045] beginning at page 11, line 27, which starts with “This schematic illustration” with the following amended paragraph:

This schematic illustration is adapted from published reports to show a putative mechanism by which an RNA transcript encoding or forming the msr-msd elements may fold to create stem-and-loop structures as a result of base-pairing between complimentary inverted repeat sequences, such as the a1 and a2 or b1 and b2 sequences. As illustrated, a stem-and-loop structure within the msr element is thought to recruit reverse transcriptase, which may be expressed in trans, to place the enzyme in an appropriate context so that it can use the 2'-hydroxyl group of a specific guanosine residue in the msr element to prime reverse transcription. Reverse transcription is shown proceeding ~~through~~ to form the msd element and terminating at a juncture between msr and msd elements. In the absence of an RNaseH-like activity, an extended RNA-DNA hybrid molecule may result. As shown in the alternative, in the presence of an RNaseH-like activity, an extended ssDNA molecule may result.